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STENDHAL.

OF all the prominent French writers of this century Stendhal is the least known; even his contemporaries knew him slightly; the literary critics of his day either praised his works too highly or declared them absolutely worthless. Taine in his '*Les philosophes classiques au xix^e siècle*' calls him a great novelist and the greatest psychologist of the century; and in his '*Essais de critique et d'histoire*' he says that Stendhal is eminently an ingenious and inventive writer. Balzac also was an enthusiastic admirer of Stendhal as can be gathered from the correspondence that passed between them; however, he never stated the reasons of his high regard for Stendhal's genius. Taine expresses his opinion that in the infinite world, the artist chooses his own method, and that Stendhal treats preëminently the sentiments, traits of character, the changing passions, the life of the soul; such characters, he thinks, are the only ones worthy of our interest. Sainte-Beuve sees in Stendhal a man of esprit and acumen, but blames his affectation and charges him with a conspicuous lack of inventive spirit; he finally declares Stendhal's novels detestable. This critic's harsh and altogether unjust judgment shows that he did not understand the writer's peculiar character and works. Of the latter, "*Le rouge et le noir*" and "*La chartreuse de Parme*" are clearly the best, and the author reveals himself therein as an able psychologist. He presents only the intellectual attributes of man; only the intellect, sentiments, passions and character of man interest him, and he recognizes no relationship between the brain and the rest of the human economy; he likewise neglects to consider the surroundings in which he places his characters; his work consists in studying the peculiarities of the soul's mechanism, taking no account of that influence which human society and nature inevitably exert over man and his intellectual life.

The narrow view which this writer took of man's life was shared by all the great classical authors of the two preceding centuries. In this respect Taine compares Stendhal with Racine who, he says, is much praised for his knowledge of the emotions of the heart, its conflicts and follies; but one overlooks, the

critic adds, the fact that the exact as well as rational explanations each character gives of its emotions, cause the characters to appear less truthful. Stendhal's characters are on the contrary real, in spite of the fact that he followed Racine's method; his oratory is diametrically opposed to that of Racine. Nobody understood better than our author the working of the soul's mechanism; when one idea appears it is like a wheel which sets in motion other wheels, and soon we see the soul active with all its faculties, sentiments and passions. Starting with one idea, Stendhal evolves from it a whole group of ideas, interlacing and unravelling them at will, and there is nothing more delicate, more penetrating or surprising than this continual analysis of the operations of the brain in order to reveal their hidden recesses. He imagines a soul endowed with certain sentiments and fixed passions, throws it into a series of events and watches how it will act in given circumstances; he does not arrive at truth by way of observation, but he often discovers it by dint of reasoning.

Stendhal is frequently compared with Balzac though a wide gap separates them. The latter is serious in the delineation of character, for his work is founded upon a careful and conscientious observation of human nature; he often gives a detailed account of the whole human economy and its effect on its surroundings, while Stendhal remains in his psychological laboratory analyzing ideas, studying only the operations of the brain, and noting every variation. He writes not to analyze man and nature and to show how they act upon each other, but for the purpose of bringing into play his theories of love and the formation of ideas. Take a character from one of Stendhal's novels and you find it a purely intellectual, emotional machine ingeniously constructed; while in Balzac the characters are people of flesh and bone, properly attired and breathing naturally the air in which they live. Where is the most finished work, where is life? The answer is evident. How is it that Stendhal's characters are so quickly effaced from memory? Unquestionably because they are rather intellectual speculations than life-like creations. It is strange that Balzac, so impetuous and turbulent, elucidates his charac-

ters and gives them the breath of life, whereas Stendhal, so calm and serene, only succeeds in perplexing his to the point of making them mere cerebral phenomena without real life. The characteristic of Stendhal's talent is the extraordinary capacity of unearthing truth by his acute psychological sense; he does not depict nature with sincerity, nor does he describe faithfully what he has seen; he subjects the world to his theories and pictures it according to his own ideas of social life. In spite of all this neglect of reality, he discovers by sheer speculation bold truths which he was the first to incorporate into the novel.

Stendhal is the connecting link between the novel of to-day and that of the eighteenth century. To-day Victor Hugo is thought to have lead the movement called Romanticism, but it remains a fact that he found that movement well-grounded when he began to write. With his powerful rhetoric he appropriated it, thus compelling the original Romantics to leave the Romantic school if they did not wish to be eclipsed by his genius. Stendhal who was Hugo's senior by twenty years, clung to the eighteenth century style, the clearness and vivacity of which were soon clouded in a sea of epithets that turned the immortal Greeks and Romans into knights of the Middle Ages. The exaggeration in feeling and character, the sensitiveness and madness displayed by the Romantic school disgusted him. In "Le rouge et le noir" he presents the characters free from all adornment of rhetoric, apart from literary and social conventionalities; "La chartreuse de Parme" is the first French novel which is faithful to the surroundings in which its plot is laid.

Stendhal's novels are all defective as regards their style and composition; the former is rugged and even barbarous, and the latter is confused and hazy. He writes without method or system, recording his thoughts just as they occur to him, without sifting or grouping them. His composition is a jumble of words and phrases, often without the least coherence or relation to one another. It seems inconceivable that this eminent logician and psychologist should have been unable to write a clear style, and yet the fact remains beyond dispute.

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GERMAN LITERATURE.

Jahresberichte für neuere deutsche Literaturgeschichte. Herausgegeben von J. ELIAS, M. HERRMANN, S. SZALMATÓLSKI. Erster Band (1890). Stuttgart: J. G. Göschen. 1892, 8vo pp, 196.

THE general scope of the new 'Jahresberichte' is probably known by this time to many readers of the NOTES, but a word upon the subject may not be inappropriate. Each volume is intended to report upon the literary output of one year in the field of modern German literature. Besides the three general editors there are thirty-three collaborators, in the list of whom are to be found many of the best names in Germany. The form selected is a large solid page (8¾ in. by 5¾ in.), with type similar to that used in these columns. Attention is confined strictly to publications of a scientific character. Owing to the large number of hands concerned, there is a lack of uniformity in style and perspective, but this does not seriously interfere with the value of the work. On the whole there is a commendable freedom from clannishness and acrid polemic.

The first volume, for 1890, contains one hundred and sixty-six pages and reviews a myriad of publications in many different specialties. We have first an "Allgemeiner Teil," which is divided into nine sections. In the first Max Herrmann, of Berlin, deals with the history of literature from the methodological point of view. Production in this field has been rather active of late and will now, no doubt, be still further stimulated by the death of Taine. Herrmann gives his attention chiefly to Wolff's 'Wesen wissenschaftlicher Literaturbetrachtung,' Pniower's 'Neue Literaturgeschichte,' Groth's 'Kulturgeschichte und Literaturgeschichte' and Wetz's 'Shakespeare vom Standpunkte der vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte.' In none of these does Herrmann find an important advance toward a normative science of literary history, and he evidently has but little faith in the possibility of such a science. In the second section Schönbach, of Graz, writes of the history of German philology, reviewing the Grimm brothers' correspondence with Benecke, as lately published by W. Müller, the eighth